

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S

LETTERS

A TRUE STORY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

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LORD CHESTERFIELD'S EARS.

CHAPTER I.

THERE can be no doubt that every thing in the world is governed by fatality. My own life is a convincing proof of this doctrine. Lord Chesterfield, with whom I was a great favourite, had promised me that I should have the first living that fell to his gift. An old incumbent of 80 happened to die, and I immediately travelled post to London, to remind the Earl of his promise.—I was honoured with an immediate interview, and was received with the greatest kindness; I informed his Lordship of the death of the Rector, and of the hope I cherished relative to the disposal of the vacant living, and he replied that truly I looked very ill. I answered, that, thanks to God, my greatest affliction was poverty. I am sorry for you, said his Lordship, and will do all that I can towards your being perfectly cured of your complaint; so doing, he politely dismissed me with a letter of introduction to a Mr. Sidrac, who dwelt in the vicinity of Guildhall. I ran as fast as I could to this gentleman's house, not doubting, but that he would immediately install me in the wished-for living. I delivered the Earl's letter, and Mr. Sidrac, who had the honour to be my Lord's surgeon, asked me to sit down, and, producing a case of surgical instruments, began to assure me, that if I was afflicted with the stone, he would perform an operation, which he trusted would very soon relieve me.

You must know, that his Lordship had understood that I was suffering under this dreadful complaint, and that he generously intended to have me cured at his own expence. The Earl had the misfortune to be as deaf as a post, a fact, with which I, alas! had not been previously acquainted.

During the time which I lost in defending my bladder against the attacks of Mr. Sidrac, who insisted positively upon probing it, whether I would or no, one, out of the fifty candidates, who were all on the look out, came to town, flew to my Lord, begged the vacant living, and obtained it.

I was deeply in love with an interesting girl, a Miss Fidler, who had promised to marry me upon condition of my being made Rector; my fortunate rival not only got the living, but my mistress into the bargain!

Lord Chesterfield, upon being told of his mistake, promised to make me ample amends, but alas! he died two days after.

Mr. Sidrac demonstrated to me, that, according to his organic structure, my good patron could not have lived one hour longer; he also clearly proved that the Earl's deafness proceeded entirely from the extreme dryness of the drums of his ears, and kindly offered to harden both my ears by an application of spirits of wine, to such a degree, that I should, in one month only, become as deaf as any peer of the realm.

I discovered Mr. Sidrac to be a man of profound knowledge, he inspired me with a taste for the study of nature, and I could not but be sensible of the valuable acquisition I had made, in acquiring the friendship of a man, who was capable of relieving me, should any thing happen to my bladder or its vicinity. Following his advice, I applied myself closely to the study of nature, to console myself for the loss of the rectory and of my enchanting Miss Fidler.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER making many profound observations upon nature, (having employed in the research, my five senses, my spectacles, and a very large microscope,) I said one day to Mr. Sidrac, Unless I am much deceived, philosophy laughs at us, I cannot discover any trace of what the world calls nature, on the contrary, every thing seems to me to be the result of art.—By art the planets are made to revolve round the sun, while the sun revolves on his own axis. I am convinced that some genius, as clear as any member of the royal academy, has arranged things in such a manner, that the square of the revolutions of the planets is always in proportion to the cubic root from their distance to their centre, and one had need be a magician to find out how this is accomplished.

The tides of the sea are the result of art no less profound, and no less difficult to explain.

All animals, vegetables and minerals are arranged with due regard to weight and measure, number and motion. All is performed by springs, levers, pullies, hydraulic machines, and chemical combinations, from the insignificant flea to the being called man, from the grass of the field to the far spreading oak, from a grain of sand to a cloud in the firmament of heaven—assuredly, every thing is governed by art, and the word NATURE is but a chimera.

You are right, replied Sidrac, but you have not discovered what is called the root of the matter. What astonishes me, and what I most admire in this wonderful system, is, that by means of incomprehensible art, two machines can be so constituted as to be made to produce a third. Alas! said I

understand but too well your drift, and am only sorry that it it was fixed from all eternity, that, in producing a third being, Miss Fidler should employ another machine than myself.

What you say, answered Mr. Sidrac, has been said many years ago, and so much the better, for the probability is greater that your remark is true; it is indeed very droll that two beings should have the power of producing a third, but this assertion is not correct with regard to all things. Two flowers cannot by a loving embrace produce a third, neither can two metals or two pebbles, and yet metals and pebbles are things that man with all his boasted ingenuity and power of invention would never be able to form. The greatest wonder is, that a man and a woman should always form a child and never a monster, and that two nightingales should produce a third nightingale, and never a sparrow. We ought to pass the one half of our lives in imitating these prodigies, and the other half in blessing him who originally planned and executed these wondrous mysteries. There are a thousand curious secrets in generation. The great Newton says, nature is every where alike. This famous remark of his, is totally false with regard to love or rather concupiscence. Neither birds, beasts nor fishes perform the rites of Venus in the same manner that we do, the whole is one infinite variety. The creating active and thinking beings delight one. The nature of vegetables is also well worth our attention; I am always astonished when I reflect, that a grain of wheat cast into the earth will produce in a short time above a handful of the same corn. Stop, said I foolishly, you forget that wheat must die before it can spring up again, at least so they say at college. My friend Sidrac, laughing heartily at this interruption, replied, that assertion went down very well a few years ago, when it was first published by a fellow called Paul, but in our more enlightened age, the

meanest day-labourer knows that the thing is altogether too ridiculous even for argument. My dear friend said I, excuse the absurdity of my remark. I have hitherto been a Theologian, and one cannot divest one's self in a moment of every silly opinion.

CHAPTER III.

SOME time after this conversation between the disconsolate person whom we shall call Goodman and that clever anatomist, Mr. Sidrac, the latter, one fine morning, observed his friend in St. James's Park standing in an attitude of deep thought, and apparently more embarrassed than a mathematician who has just discovered a mistake in one of his most complicated calculations.--- "What's the matter?" said the surgeon, is there any thing amiss with your bladder or colon? No, replied Goodman, but I confess I am a little troubled with bile; I have just seen the proud and haughty bishop of N--- roll past in an elegant carriage, while I am obliged to walk on foot, and I acknowledge that the thoughts suggested to me by this are not of the most agreeable nature. I was just calculating, that if I wished to obtain a bishoprick, the chances are at least ten thousand to one against my success. I am left without a patron in the world since the death of Lord Chesterfield, who had the misfortune to be so deaf. Now supposing there to be only ten thousand clergymen in England, and granting these ten thousand have each two patrons, the odds against my obtaining a bishopric are twenty thousand to one; a reflection quite sufficient to give any man the blue-devils. I remember, it was once proposed to me, to go out as cabin-boy to the East Indies. I was told

that I should make my fortune. But I did not think I should make a good admiral, whenever I should arrive at the distinction; and so, after turning my attention to every profession under the sun, I am fixed for life as a poor clergyman, good for nothing.

Then be a clergyman no longer! cried Sidrac, and turn philosopher, what is your income?—only thirty guineas a year, to be sure, at the death of my mother, it will be increased to fifty. Well, my dear Goodman, that sum is quite sufficient to support you in comfort, thirty guineas are six hundred and thirty shillings, almost two shillings a day; with this fixed income, a man need do nothing to increase it, but is at perfect liberty to say all he thinks of the East India Company, the house of Commons, the king and all the royal family, of man generally and individually, and lastly, of God and his attributes; and the liberty we enjoy of expressing our thoughts upon these most interesting topics, is certainly very agreeable and amusing.

Come and dine at my table every day, that will save you some little money. We will afterwards amuse ourselves with conversation, and your thinking faculty will have the pleasure of communicating with mine by means of speech, which is certainly a very wonderful thing, though its advantages are not duly appreciated by the greater part of mankind.

After their dinner, the learned man stood the word *anima*, to signify the life of the animal. The Greeks called the breath the soul. The Romans translated the word breath by *spiritus*, and thence it is that the word spirit or soul is found in every modern nation. As it happens that no one has ever seen this spirit or breath, our imagination has converted it into a being, which it is impossible to see or touch. The learned tell us that the soul inhabits the body without having

CHAPTER IV.

Dialogue between Goodman and Sidrac upon the soul and several other equally trifling topics.

GOODMAN.

BUT my dear Sidrac, why do you always say *my thinking faculty* and not *my soul*? if you used the latter term I should understand much better what you meant.

SIDRAC.

And for my part, I freely confess, I should not understand what I meant myself. I *feel*, I *know*, that God has endowed me with the faculties of thinking and speaking, but I can neither *feel* nor *know* that God has given me a thing called a soul.

GOODMAN.

Truly upon reflection, I perceive that I know as little about the matter as you do, though I own that I have, all my life, been bold enough to believe that I knew. I have often remarked that the Eastern nations apply to the soul, the same word, they use to express life. After their example, the Latins understood the word *anima*, to signify the life of the animal. The Greeks called the breath the soul. The Romans translated the word breath by *spiritus*, and thence it is that the word spirit or soul is found in every modern nation. As it happens that no one has ever seen this spirit or breath, our imagination has converted it into a being, which it is impossible to see or touch. The learned tell us, that the soul inhabits the body without having

any place in it, that it has the power of setting our different organs in motion without being able to reach and touch them, indeed, what is there; that has not been said upon the subject? The great Locke was perfectly sensible into what a chaos, these absurdities had plunged the human understanding. He did not compose a single chapter on the soul, in writing the only reasonable book upon metaphysics that has yet appeared in the world; and, if by chance, he now and then makes use of the word, he only introduces it to stand for intellect or mind.

In fact, every human being, in spite of Bishop Berkeley, is sensible that he has a mind; that this mind or intellect is capable of receiving ideas, of collecting and dispersing them; but no one can feel that there is another being within him, which gives him motion, feeling and thought: it is, in the abstract, ridiculous to use words we do not understand and to admit the existence of beings of whom we cannot arrive at the slightest knowledge.

SIDRAC. We are then agreed upon a subject, which, for so many centuries has been matter of dispute.

GOODMAN. And I must observe that I am surprized, we should so soon be agreed upon it;

SIDRAC. Oh! that is not so astonishing. We really wish to know what is truth. If we were among the academies, we should argue like the characters in Rabelais. If we had lived in those ages of darkness, the clouds of which so long enveloped Great Britain, one of us would very likely have buried the other. We are so fortunate as to be born in an age compa-

rationally reasonable; we easily discover what appears to us to be truth, and we are not afraid to proclaim it.

That has not been said upon the subject? The great Locke was perplexed into what a chaos.

GOODMAN.

You are right, but I fear, that, after all, the truth we have discovered is not worth much. In the mathematics indeed, we have done wonders, from the most simple causes we have produced effects that would have astonished Apollonius or Archimedes, and have made those great men become our scholars; but what have we proved in metaphysics? Absolutely, nothing but our own ignorance.

SIDRAO.

And do you call that nothing? You grant the supreme Being has given you the faculties of feeling and thinking, in the same manner that he has given your feet the faculty of walking, your hands power to do a thousand different things, your stomach the capability of digesting food, and your heart the power of throwing blood by means of the arteries, into all parts of your body. Every thing we enjoy is derived from God, and yet we are totally ignorant of the means by which he governs and conducts the universe: For mine own part, as Shakespear says, I thank him for having taught me, that of the principles of things, I know absolutely nothing. It has always been a question, in what manner the soul acted upon the body; before attempting to answer this question, I must be convinced that I have a soul. Either God has given us this wonderful spark of intellect, or he has gifted us with some principle that answers equally well. In whatever manner he may have acted, we are still the creatures of his divine will and goodness, and that is all I know about the matter.

GOODMAN.

But if you do not know, tell me at least, what you are inclined to think upon the subject—you have opened skulls, and have dissected many human fetuses—have you ever, in these dissections, discovered any appearance of a soul?

SIDRAC.

Not the least, and I have never been able to understand how an immortal and spiritual essence could dwell for nine months together, wrapped up in a stinking membrane, between the urine and the excrements. It appears to me difficult to conceive that this pretended soul existed before the foundation of the body; for in what could she have been employed during the many ages previous to her mysterious union with flesh? Again! how can we imagine a spiritual principle waiting patiently in idleness during a whole eternity, in order to animate a mass of matter for a space of time, which compared with eternity is less than a moment.

What would have become of this unknown being, if the fetus, for whose animation it was intended, had happened to die in the womb? It appears still more ridiculous to imagine that God creates a soul every time a man has connexion with a woman; it seems to me little less than blasphemous to suppose that God watches for the consummation of adultery or incest in order to reward these crimes, by creating souls for the fruits of them.

It is worse still, when I am told that God forms immortal souls out of nothing, and then cruelly dooms them to an eternity of flames and torments.

What? burn a spirit, in which there can be nothing capable of burning; how can he burn the sound of a voice, or the wind that blows? though both the sound and wind were material during the

short time of their existence; but a pure spirit—a thought—a doubt—I am lost in the labyrinth; on whichsoever side I turn, I find nothing but obscurity and absurdity, impossibility and contradiction. But I am quite at ease when I say to myself God is master of all. He who can cause the stars to hold each its particular course through the broad expanse of the firmament can very easily give us sentiments and ideas, without our requiring this little pitiful atom, called the soul. It is certain that God has endowed all animals in a greater or lesser degree, with thought, memory and judgment; he has given them life, it is demonstrated that they have feeling, since they possess all the organs of feeling; if then they have all this without a soul, why is it improbable that we have no souls? and why do mankind flatter themselves that they alone are gifted with a spiritual and immortal principle?

GOODMAN.

Perhaps this idea arises from their inordinate vanity. I am persuaded that if the peacock could speak, he would boast of his soul, and would affirm that it inhabited his magnificent tail. I am very much inclined to believe with you, that God has created us thinking creatures, with the faculties of eating, drinking, feeling, &c., without telling us one word about the matter; we are as ignorant as the peacock I just mentioned, and he who has said that we live and die without knowing how, why, or wherefore, has spoken nothing but the truth.

SIDRAC.

A celebrated author, whose name I forget, calls us nothing more than the puppets of Providence, and this seems to me to be a very good definition; an infinity of movements are necessary to our existence, but we did not ourselves invent and produce motion; there is a Being, who has created light, caused

it to move from the sun to our eyes, and to arrive upon the earth in about seven minutes; it is only by means of motion, that my five senses are put in action, and it is only by means of my senses, that I have ideas; hence it follows that my ideas are derived from the great author of motion, and when he informs me in what manner he communicates these ideas to me, I will most sincerely tell him, I am very much obliged to him.

GOODMAN.

And so will I; as it is, I constantly thank him, for having permitted me, as Epictetus says, to contemplate for a period of some years this beautiful and glorious world. It is true, that he could have made me happier, by putting me in possession of Miss Fidler and a good Rectory; but still, such as I am, with my income of six hundred and thirty six shillings a year, I consider myself as under a great obligation to God's parental kindness and care.

SIDRAC.

You say, that it is in the power of God to give you a good living, and to make you still happier than you at present are. There are many persons who would not scruple flatly to contradict this proposition of yours. Do you forget that you yourself sometimes complain of fatality? A man, and particularly a priest, ought never to contradict one day, an assertion he has perhaps made the day before. Do you not see that if you had had the living and the wife you desired, that it would be you that would have helped Miss Fidler to make a child, and not your rival? This child of whom she would have been brought to bed, might perhaps have taken a liking to the sea, from a cabin boy, he might very naturally have become an admiral, and in that capacity have gained a victory at the mouth of the Ganges,

which might have dethroned the Great Mogul;— This event would have affected the whole constitution of the Universe. Indeed it would have been necessary to create quite a different world in order that your rival should not have your living nor your mistress, and that your income should not exceed six hundred and thirty shillings a year, at least, until the death of your Aunt. All is a succession of links; and God is wiser than to break the eternal chain of events, even for the sake of my dear friend Goodman.

GOODMAN.

I did not certainly foresee this argument, when I was speaking of fatality; but to come at once to the point, if it be so, God is as much a slave as myself!

SIDRAC.

He is the slave of his will, of his wisdom, and of the laws which he has himself instituted; and it is impossible that he can infringe upon any of them; because it is impossible that he can become either weak or inconsistent.

GOODMAN.

But my friend, what you say would tend to make us irreligious, for if God cannot change any of the affairs of the world, what is the use of teasing him with prayers, or of singing hymns to his praise?

SIDRAC.

Well! who bids you worship or pray to God? truly, he cares a vast deal about neither your prayers nor praises. We praise a man because we think him vain; we intreat of him when we think him weak; and likely to change his purpose on account of our petitions. — Let us do our duty to God, by being just.

and true to each other; in that consists our real prayers, and our most heartfelt praises.

GOODMAN.

My friend, we have gone over a great deal of ground in this short conversation; for without reckoning Miss Fidler, we have examined whether we have a soul, if there be a God, or any other state of being beyond the grave, and several other interesting questions; which I should have perhaps never considered, if I had been a Rector, as I have at present nothing to occupy my time, I really must examine a little into these things, the knowledge of which is necessary and so sublime.

SIDRAC.

Very well, to-morrow Doctor Grout is coming to dine with me, he is a very learned man, who has been all round the world in company with Banks and Solander; he ought, therefore, to know much more concerning God and the soul than we, who have always been ants of the same dunghill, besides, Doctor Grout, when a young man, made the tour of Europe, and was the intimate friend of the Rev. Father Malagrida, whom he had the pleasure to see burned at Lisbon, for repeating what the Holy Virgin had revealed to him, respecting the manner in which she amused herself, while in the womb of her mother Saint Anne; you will allow that a man who has seen as much as Doctor Grout, ought to be one of the greatest metaphysicians in the world, so adieu, my dear Goodman, until to-morrow at dinner-time.

GOODMAN.

And the next day at dinner-time too, my friend, for I fear I shall not be able to get much instruction during one dinner alone.

CHAPTER V.

The next day, our three philosophers dined together and, when they had freely circulated the bottle, began, as men generally do after a good dinner, to amuse themselves, by discoursing upon the follies that disgrace, and the pestilences that destroy so large a proportion of our unfortunate species. This diversity of abominations could not fail of affording them infinite entertainment; indeed, conversation of this kind is a pleasure that cannot be enjoyed by plebeians who have never travelled out of the sound of the church-bell near which they were brought into being, and who believe that all the rest of the world is precisely constituted like Change-Alley, or White-Chapel.

I observe, said Doctor Grout, that, notwithstanding the immense variety spread over the Globe, all the men I ever saw, whether black or brown, red or white, have alike two legs, two eyes, and a head on their shoulders, though St. Augustine, in his 27th Sermon, assures us, that he has seen men born with only one eye, and others with only one leg, besides Anthropophagi, in great abundance.

I have been often asked whether all the inhabitants of that large country called New Zealand, who are to this day the most barbarous of the barbarous, were baptized in the Catholic Faith? I have answered, I knew nothing about it, but that the thing might nevertheless be; that the Jews who were still greater barbarians than the New Zealanders, had two baptisms instead of one. I allude to their baptism of justice, and their baptism of dwelling.

I am acquainted with them both, said Goodson.

and have often disputed the point with those who believe that the Christians were the inventors of baptism. No, Gentlemen, we have invented nothing, we have only pillaged from the religious ceremonies of other sects. But tell me, I beseech you, out of the eighty or ninety different systems of religion which you must have seen followed in some part or other of the world, which do you consider the most agreeable, that of the New Zealanders or that of the Hottentots?

DR. GROUT.

None of them are at all comparable with that of the Island of Otaheite. I have travelled over the whole surface of the habitable globe, but have never seen any thing that could equal Otaheite and its very religious queen, whom God preserve. It is only in Otaheite that nature really dwells; every where else the human animal wears a mask.

In matters of religion, particularly, a gang of rogues, under the name of priests, deceive the honest and simple-minded. They promise us riches and pleasures in another world, in return for those with which we endow them in this. Not so in Otaheite. This island is much more civilized than New Zealand or the country of the Caffres, and in some respects is far preferable to either France or England. Nature has favoured it with a more fertile soil; she has given it the bread-fruit tree, a present equally useful and beneficent, and which is unknown except to the islands in the South-Sea; besides, Otaheite possesses plenty of fowls, greens and fruits, so that there is no occasion for man to eat man; there is no want of food, but there is a want more natural and more congenial, which the religion of Otaheite ordains to be gratified in public. Of all the religious ceremonies I ever beheld, this is doubtless the most imposing and the most interesting. I witnessed it in common with the rest of the Gentle-

men on board our ship, and can therefore certify the truth of this singular ceremony, which has been slightly mentioned by Dr. Hawkesworth in his celebrated work upon the discoveries made by our enterprising countrymen in the South Sea.

In company with Captain Cook, Messieurs Banks, Solander, and many others, I saw what I am now going to relate to you:—

The Prince of Obeira, Queen of the Island of Otaheite.

But just as the Doctor commenced his singular narrative, coffee was brought in, and when it had been handed round, the speaker resumed his discourse thus:—

CHAPTER VI.

THE princess Obeira, I was saying, after having with a degree of politeness worthy the queen of England, loaded us with valuable presents, was curious one morning to assist in celebrating the ceremonies of our religion, after the English fashion.

We accordingly went through the church service with all due pomp and splendour, and after dinner, the queen invited us in return to witness the manner in which her subjects worshipped the Deity of Otaheite. We found about a thousand persons of both sexes ranged in a respectable manner round their queen, and forming an extensive circle.

A young girl, extremely handsome, in a voluptuous deshabille, lay upon a kind of scaffold which I served instead of an altar, then the queen commanded a well made fellow, about twenty years of age,

to go up and sacrifice. He immediately pronounced a kind of prayer, and most devoutly ascended the steps of the altar. Both he and the girl were then disincumbered of their clothes, and the queen, with a majestic air, shewed the young and tender victim, how to proceed in order to consummate the sacrifice. All the Otahaitians round were so serious and silent, that none of our sailors dared disturb the ceremony by even a profane laugh. I have now told you what I saw, and what was also seen by almost the whole ship's company; it is for you to draw what inference you please from the performance of this singular and sacred rite.

This holy festival does not in the least astonish me, said Goodman. I am persuaded that it is the first fête men ever thought of celebrating, and I do not see why we should not adore God prior to forming an image, as the Bible says, after his likeness, as well as say grace before we eat our dinner.

Surely, to labour in the formation of a reasoning and thinking creature, is the most noble and pious action, that can possibly be performed by man. Thus thought the first Indians who worshipped the lingam, as a symbol of generation; the ancient Egyptians who carried the phallus in solemn procession; the Greeks who erected temples in honour of Priapus, and lastly the Jews, if I may be permitted to mention a people who always purloined their religious ceremonies from surrounding nations, who have it written in one of their books, that they also worshipped Priapus, and that the queen-mother of the Jewish king Asa was his grand priestess.

However that may be, it is very true, that no nation has ever been able to establish a theological system by means of libertinism alone; excess will after a time naturally enter into such a religion, but the beginning of it, as in Otahete, is always pure and innocent. Our first agapes, or love-feasts

during which, the youth of both sexes, modestly kissed each other's lips, did not for many ages degenerate into rendezvous for intrigue and infamy. Would to God that I might be permitted to offer sacrifice with Miss Fidler, in all due honour and respect, before the good and pious queen Obeira: the day on which that event took place, would certainly be the happiest day of my life.

Sidrac, who had until now kept silence, because our friends Grout and Goodman engrossed all the conversation to ourselves, at length spoke, and said:—

I cannot sufficiently admire what I have just heard. Queen Obeira certainly appears to me to have been the greatest and wisest lady in the world; but, amidst so much glory and happiness, there is one circumstance, the very thought of which makes me shudder, and which has been slightly touched upon by your friend Goodman, is it true, Dr Grout, that Captain Wallis, who visited the favoured island of Otahite long before you, brought away with him that most horrible scourge under which the human race suffers, I mean the venereal disease? Alas! for mankind, replied Grout, it is impossible to say. The French accuse us of being the first propagators in Europe, of this infernal disease, and we accuse the French of the same thing. Monsieur Bougainville says the English infected queen Obeira, and Captain Cook affirms that the lady in question was infected by Monsieur Bougainville himself. However the truth of this may be, the venereal disease may be said to resemble the fine arts in respect of its being unknown who was the original inventor; but by degrees it has overrun all the four quarters of the world.

I have now been a surgeon for many years, said Sidrac, and I freely confess that it is to this disease I owe the greater part of the money I have acquired in the profession; but I assure you, I do not the less abhor

the cursed pestilence Mrs. Sidrac unfortunately infected me on our wedding night, and as she is excessively delicate in her feelings, she put an advertisement in all the public papers, saying upon affidavit, that it was true she was suffering under the venereal disease, but that she had imbibed it in her mother's womb, and that it had been long hereditary in the family. What could Nature have been thinking of when she infused this dreadful poison into the very sources of life? It has been said, and I have repeated it, that it is the most horrible and detestable of all possible contradictions. What? Man is told it is made in the image of God, and it is in the same vessels of this image, that are fixed infection, misery, and death. What becomes of Lord Rochester's fine saying; that if love alone would cause God to be addressed, amidst even a nation of Atheists? Then said our simple friend, Goodman, "Alas! I thought perhaps to thank God for not permitting me to marry my dear and lamented Miss. Ridler; for who knows what might not have happened? One can never be certain in this world of anything; however, come what may, remember my dear Sidrac, you have promised your assistance in case any thing should come through the world, and for my part, I have always been ready to assist you in any thing you may require. It is time now to think of these things when they happen to hand (attend to the mystery of the intestines) the subject of the subject, Goodman the intestines (you said) of the subject of the intestines. Now, notwithstanding the three coats with which each intestine is covered, it is perforated like a sieve, for every thing is open to nature, and there is no grain of sand however diminutive it may seem, that has not hundreds of pores in it. It is ascertained that a number of needles might be passed through a cannon ball, if the needles could be fabricated of a

the cursed pestilence Mrs. Sidrac unfortunately infected me on our wedding night, and as she is excessively delicate in her feelings she put an everlasting barrier in all the public papers, saying upon affidavit that it was true she was suffering under the plague.

CHAPTER VII.

By next day our three philosophers were discussing the great and important question, what is the chief ruling principle that influences the actions of man? Goodham, who had not yet forgotten the loss of his Electory and his amiable Miss Fiddler, said, that the principle of all, the *primum mobile*, was a compound of love and ambition. Great, who had travelled through more countries, and had consequently a larger view of human nature, pronounced it to be money. And the great naturalist, Sidrac, with an air of the profoundest gravity, gave his opinion that the principle of all was the lesser spirit. His friends were thunderstruck at so bold an assertion, and Sidrac went on to prove his singular proposition. I have observed, said he, throughout life, that all the affairs of this world depend on the opinion and will of some principal personage, whether King, Queen, or Minister; now his opinion and this will are the immediate effects of the humor in which the animal spirits pass through the brain and marrow. These animal spirits depend on the formation of the chyle. The chyle is formed in the network of the mesentery; the mesentery (attend to what I say) is attached to the intestines by a number of very fine threads; the intestines (if I may be allowed to say so) are filled with stercoraceous matter. Now, notwithstanding the three coats with which each intestine is covered, it is perforated like a sieve, for every thing is open to nature, and there is no grain of sand however diminutive it may seem, that has not hundreds of pores in it. It is ascertained that a number of needles might be passed through a cannon ball, if the needles could be fabricated of a

texture sufficiently delicate and fine. If a man then
 be costive, what a dreadful state his inside must
 fall into! the finer and purer essences escape from
 the excrements and mingle with the chyle, passing
 thence with the blood, through the whole body, to
 through the heart and the dashing exquisite, as well
 as through the brain (if she have any brain) of the
 gay and wanton coquet. If this happen to man,
 naturally of a warm and passionate temperament, his
 anger becomes perfect ferocity, the whites of his
 eyes turn almost black, his lips are parched and
 burnt up, his very look seems to threaten you, be-
 ware how you approach him. If he be a minister
 of state, do not present your petition while he is in
 this unfortunate situation; he regards all kinds of
 papers as if he wished to make use of them in that
 abominable manner, after which the work of authors
 are too frequently treated,—give his valet half a
 crown, and get him to inform you whether his mas-
 ter has had a stool this morning.
 What I mention is of much greater importance,
 than at first sight it appears to be. Costiveness
 has too often been the original cause of the most
 sanguinary and dreadful scenes. My grandfather,
 who lived to the age of a hundred, had the honour
 of being apothecary to the renowned Oliver Crom-
 well. He has often told me, that when that usurper
 signed the warrant for the execution of Charles the
 first, he had not sacrificed to the Goddess Cloacina,
 for above a week.
 Every body knows that the Duke de Guise was
 warned not to affront Henry the third of France,
 during a North-east wind; for while the wind blew
 from that quarter, this monarch could very rarely
 relieve himself from the unpleasant load occasioned
 by extreme costiveness, accordingly the fumes mount-
 ed to his brain, and for a time he was capable of
 every act of violence. The Duke de Guise put no
 faith in the advice that was given him, and what

was the consequence? Both the Duke and his brother were basely assassinated. Take another case. Henry's predecessor, Charles the ninth, was the most costive man in the kingdom, the passage of his colon and rectum were so closely blocked up, that blood at last burst out at the pores of his body. It is but too well known that his costive and unhappy temperament was one of the principal causes of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. On the contrary, those persons who are favoured by a regular and daily discharge of that matter so strongly recommended by the Jewish God to the most holy prophet Ezekiel as a cheap substitute for butter, those persons, I say, who can evacuate as easily as spit, are mild, affable, and compassionate; a *no* from their mouths comes with more grace, than a *yes* from the mouth of one, who has not the same happy capacity for going to stool.

The water-closet has so much ascendancy over us, that an excessive purge often renders a man cowardly, while suffering under its effects; a fit of dysentery acts in the same way. Order a man labouring under an attack of cholera morbus, to attack a battery with the point of the bayonet, he will be altogether incapable of any thing like a deed of heroism; for this reason, I cannot believe history, when it tells us that our valiant army were suffering severely from dysentery, when they fought and won the battle of Agincourt, and that our soldiers actually charged the French, with their breeches hanging down about their heels. It may be true that some few individuals were indisposed from having eaten too many plums, and hence this ridiculous report has arisen: in the same way the French have handed down to posterity an absurd tradition that our great king Edward the first, was once about to hang up six of the principal citizens of Calais, for having bravely defended that city against his attacks, and that his Queen, with much

difficulty procured their pardon; these romance writers do not know that in those barbarous ages, it was a custom upon the conquest of any fortified place, for some of the citizens to present themselves before the conqueror with ropes round their necks, a mere form, to show that their lives were entirely at his mercy. It seems to me ridiculous to suppose that the generous Edward had any idea of twisting the necks of those citizens, whom on the contrary he loaded with riches and honours.

I am quite tired of reading all the follies that are palmed upon us, under the name of history. I hardly know whether to believe in the truth of the battle of Pharsalia. Certainly I do not give credit to above one half of the wonderful victories upon record, some of them are as preposterous as the story of Gideon, gaining a battle with his three hundred pitchers, or the mighty Samson, defeating the Philistines, and killing them by hundreds, with the jaw-bone of an ass. I have almost given up reading altogether, and am much more interested in attending to plan a regimen, which will keep my bowels properly open; and procure me easy digestion followed by a refreshing sleep. Think on what I have said, drink brandy in the winter, and nothing stronger than wine in the summer; eat of that which best pleases your appetite and best agrees with your stomach, digest your food, sleep, take your pleasure, and laugh at the devil and all his works.

~~the steward, who, having been informed of the accident, had~~
~~run to the door, in his cabriolet, and found the~~
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Just as Mr. Sidrac had considered this wise ob-
servation, he looked at his watch, and saw to say that
the steward of the ship had come to knock at
the door, in his cabriolet, and found the
Mr. Goodman. Our friend, Mr. Sidrac, took to meet
the great man, who, to his astonishment, said,

"You have doubtless heard, my good Sir, of what
happened to Mr. Sidrac and his interesting wife,
on their wedding night."

"Yes, Sir, my friend has just communicated to me
the particulars of that unfortunate event."

"Well," said the steward, "the very same thing
happened to Miss Fidler and her husband the rec-
tor: the next day they quarrelled about it, and the
day after they separated. The rector must of course
give up the living to come at once to the point. I
have long loved the charming Fidler, I well know
that she loves you, though for all that I am not
disagreeable to her. I care nothing for her being
deposed, a surgeon can soon put in that fortnight. I
am in love, and am naturally of an intrepid, as well
as an amorous disposition."

"Give up your claim to Miss Fidler, and I will
in exchange immediately put you in possession of
the living which is worth at least a hundred and
fifty guineas a year. I give you ten minutes to
consider of my proposal."

Sir, replied Goodman, I will not detain you an
instant, only allow me to say three words to my
dear friends, Grout and Sidrac, he runs to these
gentlemen. I am convinced, said he, that digestion
does not alone decide the affairs of this world, but
that love, ambition, and money, have also a great

deal to do with them. He then states the case and asks his friends for their opinion: they decided that for 150 guineas, he might have all the girls in the parish, and Miss Fidler into the bargain, Goodman was sensible of the truth of this, he embraced the proposal of the amorous steward, he enjoyed the living, and Miss Fidler too in private, and liked her all the better for not being his wife. He is become one of the most zealous priests in England, a perfect Boanerges, and is more convinced than ever, that every thing in this best of all possible worlds, is governed by Fatalism.

FINIS.

